CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	LUL - Montana Department of Transportation - Snow Fence Installation
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2019
Proponent:	Montana Department of Transportation, 200 Smelter Avenue NE, Great Fall, MT 59403
Location:	W½, Section 16, T22N, R5W
County:	Teton
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Montana Department of Transportation has applied for a land use license (LUL) to install concrete blocks for snow fence on state land. The proposed project will include installing concrete blocks snow fence at 4 locations along highway 287 between Augusta and Choteau.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Montana Department of Transportation-Proponent
DNRC-Surface Owner
Gollehon Ranch LLC, Surface Lessee, Lease #8329

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny the LUL.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Approve the LUL for the installation of concrete snow fence on state land.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soils at the proposed project sites are shallow to gravel. The topography is gently rolling, and the soils and slopes are generally suitable for the installation snow fence. Snow fence will be installed on the existing ground service. No ground disturbing activities are planned. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and minor disturbance to the soils where the snow fence is installed. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

There are no water rights associated with the proposed project area. Water quality and/or quantity will not be impacted by the proposed action.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed action will not impact the air quality.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Vegetation will be minimally impacted where the snow fence is installed. Snow fence will be installed on the existing ground service. No ground disturbing activities are planned. Noxious and annual weeds in and around the snow fence are a concern but will be mitigated by MDT annually controlling weeds. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T33N, R3E: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. However, these tracts provide habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, and pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, and badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game mammals, raptors and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage) following the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

There are no threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern associated with the proposed project area.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for this location. Species of concern include Grizzly Bear, Ferruginous Hawk, Long Billed Curlew, and McCown's Longspur. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Considering the low-impact nature of the proposed project, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Installation of the snow fence will slightly change the aesthetics of the tract.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other environmental documents pertinent to the area.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project will increase human and traffic safety along highway 287 by reducing snow drifting.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The results of this project will add to the industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production in the area as it will provide a safer highway to transport goods.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed action small in scale and will be completed by existing MDT staff. Immediate and/or cumulative impacts to employment are not likely.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The proposed action will add to the tax revenue.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

This project will not create additional demand for government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed action follows State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This proposed project is next to an existing highway. This tract is legally accessible, and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

This project will generate $200.00 per year for the school trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Erik Eneboe	**Date:** September 26, 2019
	Title: Conrad Unit Manager, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Approve the LUL for the installation of concrete snow fence on state land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

As proposed, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects from the implementation of the selected alternative, the installation of concrete snow fence on state land, are anticipated. The proposed project will increase human and traffic safety along highway 287 by reducing snow drifting.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Andy Burgoyne
	Title:	Trust Land Program Manager, Central Land Office
Signature:		**Date**: September 30, 2019

LOCATIONS OF THE PROPOSED SNOW FENCE